

# MARICOPA COUNTY TRAIL COMMISSION

## MINUTES FOR MARCH 8, 2000

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**1) Meeting called to order at 2:07 p.m. by Commission Vice-Chair Supervisor Kunasek**

**2) Attendance Roll Call taken by Janet Bell-Masters**

Members Present

Bruce Ellison  
Carol Erwin (Rick Millegard)  
Eric Gorseger  
Fred Pfeifer  
James Burke  
Jerry Aster  
Laurel Arndt  
Pat Schneider  
Supervisor Andrew Kunasek

Members Absent

Conrado Gamez  
Representative Carolyn Allen  
Supervisor Fulton Brock

Ex-Officio Members Present

Joy Rich  
Mike Ellegood  
Tom Buick  
William Scalzo

**3) Introductions of Maricopa County Trail Commission**

**4) Introduction of Staff**

Greetings made to the public present, with thanks for their attendance and support. This is a team effort made by several different County Departments, Supervisor Kunasek stated that he had never seen such cooperation between County Departments.

Staff Present

Janet Bell-Masters	Reed Kempton	Tanya Olsen
Karen Stewart	Bill VanAusdal	Shelby Scharbach
Bill Allen	Tim Phillips	Bill Shaw
Erin Siebenthal	Tim Olsen	Dennis Holcombe

**5) Roles & Responsibilities of the MCTC**

Supervisor Kunasek commented that we need increase public involvement, by inviting more of the public to these meetings, to make people aware of the Trail Program. The Commission will prepare an Annual Report for the Board of Supervisors to report on its progress, and a great deal of work has to be done before this report is completed.

**6) Announcement of Future Meeting Dates and Discussion of Meeting Locations**

Quarterly meetings scheduled for June 14, September 13 and December 13, 2000, they will be held in the Durango Corridor. Other public meetings will be held at different regional facilities. We encourage you to invite more people to these meetings.

**7) Web Site Presentation - Erin Siebenthal, Maricopa County Public Information Officer**

Copies of web pages were handed out. Ms. Siebenthal Gave a detailed overview of the Web Page designed for the Maricopa County Trail Commission. The web site includes a section on the Commission, the Proposed Trail Map, the Trail Program, and a Response Area for comments. The web site address is [www.maricopa.gov/trail](http://www.maricopa.gov/trail).

**8) Presentation of Initial Draft - William C. Scalzo, Chief Community Services Officer**

Mr. Scalzo, at the request the Trail Commission Chair and Vice-Chair met with representatives from Districts 1 & 3, Parks & Recreation, Planning & Development, Flood Control, and McDOT to prepare an

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Initial Draft Plan for the Trail Commission. The Initial Draft Plan outlines the Responsibilities, Expectations, and Outcomes of the Trail Commission and its supporting Departments. A presentation of the Initial Draft Plan along with hard copies was given to the Commission. Staff welcomes input by the Trail Commission.

### ***9) Comprehensive Plan Update - Joy Rich, Planning & Development Director***

Ms. Rich explained how this Trail Program will help the County fulfill a mandate set by State Law with the integration of Open Spaces and Recreation Projects in the County's overall General Plan.

The County is under tremendous growth pressures. Urbanization of Maricopa County, preserving open space, trails, and opportunities to recreate are obviously going to become increasingly important. In 1997, the County adopted its first Comprehensive Plan, this involved more than 100 meetings out in the community. It was a partnership between Planning & Development and the Transportation Department, both of which are critically linked.

Ms. Rich gave an overview of the Comprehensive Plan and its four elements, Land Use, Transportation, Environment, and Economic Development. Some of the objectives of the plan were to encourage orderly development, provide efficient transportation and minimize adverse environmental impact and promote a diversified economy.

The first part of Growing Smarter Act required that we adopt a land use plan, open space plan, growth area plan, an environmental element and a cost development. We are in the process now of going out in the community beginning the stages of developing these four elements to meet our mandate. We will bring forth the comments from the public as we get their issues as part of our comprehensive update. Another element of Growing Smarter is there must be certain levels of public participation, notification, a 2/3 vote by the Board of Supervisors, and a plan at least 10 years in advance.

With Open Space Planning we must inventory, forecast future needs, review existing regional open space plans, and identify open space recreational resource system policies. Supervisors Kunasek and Brock came up with the idea for the County Trail System. There is significant support for Open Space preservation in the Community. This Commission will decide on just where the trails will go and what they will look like.

Supervisor Kunasek suggested that some from the Trail Commission be present at the public meetings. We feel it is important to show some result to the public on what we are planning to do. The Flood Control District has a great deal of real estate around the Valley that could be incorporated into our Trails Program.

### ***10) Early Success Options***

#### ***Marathon Trail (Eastern Maricopa Floodway) - Tim Phillips, Flood Control District, Southeast Valley Manager***

Mr. Phillips gave a presentation on the East Maricopa Floodway (Marathon Trail), which is a very wide conveyance corridor that is strictly a Flood Control project. It conveys water from North Mesa, Pinal County, and the Queen Creek area, from the east to the west; collects all the flows and takes them south across the Indian Community to the Gila River. The Flood Control District identified that there could be multiple uses, which fit into the Trail Commission concept. The Eastern Maricopa Floodway Starts at Prince Park in North Mesa, just north of Brown Road it is 26 ½ miles long, and goes across the Indian Reservation to the Gila River. Within the County, there are at least 20 miles before it gets to the Indian community. The District owns in excess of 900 acres of land.

#### ***McMicken Dam - Dennis Holcombe, Flood Control District, Landscape Architect***

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Mr. Holcombe began by explaining that White Tanks Regional Park is part of the McMicken Dam Project. McMicken Dam was built in the early 1950's by the U.S. Corps of Engineers; its original purpose was to protect the Luke Air Force Base area from flooding. The Dam corridor itself also includes a pool area, within the area is a low flow channel on the down slope side of the dam which ranges from 12 ft to 200 ft. There is also a Dam operational maintenance road. The pool area that is upslope of the dam ranges 600 ft to 5000 ft, nearly a quarter of a mile includes a broad channel. This channel has not been touched in about 35 years, and has restored itself back into Sonoran Desert landscape. Its rugged native Sonoran landscape with ocotillo, barrel, and saguaro cacti gives you the feel for the Wild West frontier. It also has a beautiful backdrop of the White Tank Mountains. Most of Flood Control projects are inside urban developed areas.

Going a little farther Northeast of the McMicken Dam outlet channel, is a high power electrical corridor. This area is a lot flatter with many transmission towers. The question here is how do we minimize the visual effect of the towers and still have a trail there. The connection from the dam eastward is a very important one. We are looking at yet another east to west connection to the West Valley Recreational Corridor. We have the Central Arizona Project, Sanokai Wash, and Lake Pleasant Regional Park. These are some of the elements we have to look at on both sides of the dam.

#### **11) Call to Commission**

- Supervisor Kunasek asked if the Flood Control District could arrange a tour of the two areas, so that we all could get a feel for the projects. Mike Ellegood responded that the District would handle the tours.
- Commissioner Ellison stated that the City of Surprise is now developing the area Southwest of Grand Avenue, they are building a 3-mile recharge station in conjunction with a John F. Long project. A stakeholder that needs to be in on this is the Maricopa Water Conservation District. They have about a 150-ft right-of-way along the Central Arizona Project and Flood Control Property, this area is currently fenced off. This led to further discussion about alternative linkage possibilities and partnerships. Supervisor Kunasek stated that we need to address this now, before a development hits the area.
- The Commission discussed overlay mapping that would show utility corridors, canals, open space, flood drainage, APS, SRP, and the cities and various municipalities. Staff from McDOT will work on this and try to make a presentation to the Commission at the June meeting.
- Commissioner Ellison informed the Commission that the City of Glendale has the Thunderbird Paseo Park at 59<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thunderbird Road as a guideline to our trail. There are 2 miles of hiking trails and plenty of parking. He suggested that the area be visited so people can get a feel for what we are trying to accomplish.

Mike Ellegood stated that the City of Glendale is responsible for maintenance of the parks, this is part of the ACDC. The District is in the Flood Control business not the Parks & Recreation business. Flood control owns the land and maintains Flood Control elements of the project. The District does not do trails, they want someone like the Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department, City of Phoenix, City of Chandler to maintain and operate these parks as a public facility, so this partnership is essential to us. Flood Control can make the properties available, but other mechanisms need to be put into place first.

- The Commission discussed ideas for marketing the Trail and getting word out to the public about what the Commission is trying to accomplish. They also discussed involvement from other groups such as hiking, bicycling, and equestrian clubs. The Commission was advised that these groups are on the distribution list for meeting notifications. There are also public events currently scheduled like the Marathon, National Trail Day, and Arbor Day Events. In addition, marketing materials can be placed in all of the County's Parks.

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- Tom Buick brought ideas up for discussion regarding the Department of Transportation's involvement in the Trail Program. Tom noted that the Department strongly supports this, and will do whatever they can, with planning, engineering, signs, etc. The restraint is that the State Law does not allow the Department of Transportation to spend any money except on building of roads. This led to discussion on Park-n-Ride Lots and bicycle efforts as they relate to roadways.

#### ***12) Call to Public***

Barb Domin stated this has been a great learning experience and asked about connecting to South Mountain Park, is this true for all parks? Supervisor Kunasek stated that what the cities are doing is separate from what we are doing.

Bill Lazenby, President of the Coalition of Arizona Bicycle, stated that since he first got wind of the Trail Program, he had not heard one bad thing about it.

#### ***13) Adjournment***

Meeting adjourned at 4:07 p.m. Next Meeting June 14, 2000 2-4 p.m. Location To Be Announced.